

Beta blockers

Generic name	Brand name
<input type="checkbox"/> atenolol	Tenormin®
<input type="checkbox"/> metoprolol	Lopressor®, Toprol®
<input type="checkbox"/> nadolol	Corgard®

Generic name	Brand name
<input type="checkbox"/> pindolol	Visken®
<input type="checkbox"/> propranolol	Inderal®

How does this medicine work?

These medicines are used to treat many conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure) and heart conditions. They are also used to treat migraine headaches, fainting spells, and occasionally behavior and emotional problems.

Beta blockers work by blocking the response to some nerve impulses in certain parts of the body. As a result, they help lower the heart rate and blood pressure, and decrease the heart's workload. They also help the heart beat more regularly.

How should I give it?

Most of these medicines come in pill form. Some are available in liquid form and in injection form.

Give it at regular times to keep a steady level in the bloodstream. Use this medicine exactly as prescribed, even if your child feels fine.

- If using the liquid form, shake well right before using. Draw up the correct amount in the medicine dropper or oral syringe. Give a small squirt of the medicine inside the cheek. To avoid choking, let your child swallow each squirt before giving more.

- For babies, you may want to mix the medicine with a small amount of formula or breast milk and give it with a bottle nipple before feeding. **Do not** add the medicine to a whole bottle because if your baby does not finish it, you will not know how much of the medicine was taken.

If your child is taking more than one dose daily, the last dose may be given at bedtime to avoid tiredness during the day.

Note: if your child's medicine is a long-acting product (noted by XL or SR after the name), it should **not** be crushed, chewed, or cut.

Other instructions:

Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

Follow your doctor's directions for using this medicine.

Give this medicine with food.

Warning! Certain medicines interact with beta blockers. It is **very important** to check with the doctor, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist before giving **any** other prescription or non-prescription medicines, vitamins, or herbs.

Avoid alcohol-containing foods, beverages, or non-prescription medicines (such as cough syrup) while taking this medicine.

What should I do if a dose is missed?

If a dose is missed, and it is prescribed **once daily**, take the missed dose as soon as you remember that day.

For medicines that are prescribed more often, follow these guidelines:

If it is prescribed:	Give it no closer than:
twice daily	6 hours from the next dose
3 times daily	3 hours from the next dose
4 times daily	skip the missed dose

If it is too close to the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with the regular schedule. **Never give a double dose.**

If your child vomits (throws up) within 30 minutes after receiving a dose, give it again. If your child vomits the second dose, do not repeat it again.

If your child misses or vomits two doses, please call the clinic.

What are the side effects?

Warning: Beta blockers may trigger breathing problems in people with asthma or similar conditions. If your child has asthma, be sure to ask your doctor before giving this medicine.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Common | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• low blood pressure• sleepiness• lightheadedness
dizziness• tiredness, weakness• nausea• dry mouth |
| Occasional | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• headache• constipation• confusion• depression |
| Rare | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nightmares• muscle cramps• rash• change in sense of taste |

The person taking this medicine **should not** drive, operate machinery, or do anything that could be dangerous (such as bicycling or riding a lawn mower) until it is clear that no risky side effects are present.

The dose may need to be increased slowly to avoid side effects.

If your child has other side effects that you think are due to this medicine, please call your doctor or pharmacist.

When should I call the clinic?

- wheezing
- slow or irregular heartbeat, or chest pain that lasts longer than 15 minutes
- fainting or going unconscious (unaware of what is going on)
- swelling of legs or ankles
- allergic reaction; signs include:
 - fever or chills
 - rash or hives
 - wheezing
 - trouble breathing - **call 911**

What else do I need to know?

Inform your doctor right away if your child has any of the following:

- heart problems
- asthma or other breathing difficulties
- diabetes
- thyroid condition

Your doctor may ask your child to come to the clinic for examination to find out if the dose or the medicine needs to be changed.

You and your child should know the names and doses of all medicines he or she is taking. **Share this information** with anyone involved in your child's care. Please bring the medicine container when your child comes to the clinic or emergency department.

Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand. Each time you refill your prescription, check to see how many refills are left. If no refills are left, the pharmacy will need 2 or 3 days to contact the clinic to renew the prescription.

Check the label and expiration date before giving each dose. Ask your pharmacist what to do with outdated or unused medicines. If there is no "take-back" program empty them into the trash.

Store all medicines in their original containers and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out of children's reach, locked up if possible.

Check with your doctor **before stopping** this medicine. The dose is usually lowered over 1 or 2 weeks.

If too much or the wrong kind of medicine is taken, call the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222. If your child is unconscious or has a seizure, **call 911**.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic or pharmacy.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Patient/Family Education
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
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